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Long drama, from '76 to '88.



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THE LONG DRAMA.

From '76 to '83.

BY WALLACE BRUCE.

With banners bright, with roll of drums,
With pride and pomp and civic state,
A nation, born of courage, comes
The closing act to celebrate.

We've traced the drama page by page
From Lexington to Yorktown field;
The curtain drops upon the stage,
The century's book to-day is sealed.

A cycle grand,—with wonders fraught
That triumph over time and space,—
In woven steel its dreams are wrought,
The nations whisper face to face.

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ANALYSIS

TABLE 1

But in the proud and onward march
We halt an hour for dress parade,
Remembering that fair freedom's arch
Springs from the base our fathers laid.

With cheeks aglow with patriot fire
They pass in long review again,
We grasp the hand of noble sire
Who made *two words* of "Noblemen."

In silence now the tattered band,—
Heroes in homespun worn and gray,—
Around the old Headquarters stand
As in that dark uncertain day.

That low-roofed dwelling shelters still
The phantom tenants of the past;
Each garret beam, each oaken sill
Treasures and holds their memories fast.

Ay, humble walls! the manger-birth
To emphasize this truth was given :
The noblest deeds are nearest earth,
The lowliest roofs are nearest Heaven.

We hear the anthem once again,—
“No king but God!”—to guide our way,
Like that of old—“Good will to men”—
Unto the shrine where freedom lay.

One window looking toward the east,
Seven doors wide-open every side ;
That room revered proclaims at least
An invitation free and wide.

Wayne, Putnam, Knox and Heath are there,
Steuben, proud Prussia's honored son,
Brave La Fayette from France the fair,
And, chief of all, our Washington.

Serene and calm in peril's hour,
An honest man without pretense,
He stands supreme to teach the power
And brilliancy of common sense.

Alike disdaining fraud and art,
He blended love with stern command;
He bore his country in his heart,
He held his army by the hand.

Hush! carping critic, read aright
The record of his fair renown:—
A leader by diviner right
Than he who wore the British crown.

With silvered locks and eyes grown dim,
As victory's sun proclaimed the morn,
He pushed aside the diadem
With stern rebuke and patriot scorn.

He quells the half-paid mutineers,
And binds them closer to the cause ;
His presence turns their wrath to tears,
Their muttered threats to loud applause.

The great Republic had its birth
That hour beneath the army's wing,
Whose leader taught by native worth
The man is grander than the king.

The stars on that bright azure field,
Which proudly wave o'er land and sea,
Were fitly taken from his shield
To be our common heraldry.

We need no trappings worn and old,
No courtly lineage to invoke,
No tinsel plate, but solid gold,
No thin veneer, but heart of oak.



No aping after foreign ways
Becomes a son of noble sire ;
Columbia wins the sweetest praise
When clad in simple, plain attire.

In science, poesy and art,
We ask the best the world can give ;
We feel the throb of Britain's heart,
And will while Burns and Shakspeare live.

But oh ! the nation is too great
To borrow emptiness and pride :
The queenly Hudson wears in state
Her robes with native pigments dyed.

October lifts with colors bright
Its mountain canvas to the sky ;
The crimson trees, aglow with light,
Unto our banners wave reply.

Along its heights the beacons gleamed,
It formed the nation's battle-line,
Firm as the rocks and cliffs where dreamed
The soldier-seers of Palestine.

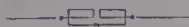
These hills shall keep their memory sure,
The blocks we rear shall fall away,
The mountain fastnesses endure,
And speak their glorious deeds for aye.

And oh ! while morning's golden urn
Pours amber light o'er purple brim,
And rosy peaks like rubies burn
Around the emerald valley's rim ;

So long preserve our hearthstone warm !
Our reverence, O God, increase !
And let the glad centennials form
One long Millenial of Peace.

THE LONG DRAMA.

FROM '76 TO '83.



A CENTENNIAL POEM

BY WALLACE BRUCE.



Read by the author at Washington's Headquarters, October 18, 1883, on the occasion of the Centennial Celebration commemorating the closing events of the Revolutionary Army.



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